

I am writing to express my strongest possible objection to National Grid's proposals regarding the abandoned Hoverport site at Pegwell Bay. As a local resident, I am deeply concerned that the applicant has failed to recognize the ecological, social, and environmental sensitivity of this unique location.

1. Social Value and Public Amenity The former Hoverport is not "waste ground"; it is a vital public asset owned by Thanet District Council. In an area with a notable shortage of open green spaces, this site serves as a primary location for residents to walk, exercise, and enjoy the panoramic views across the Pegwell Bay SSSI. The proposed industrialization of this space, involving hundreds of thousands of lorry movements, will cause "utterly horrendous" noise and light pollution, destroying the tranquility that the community relies on for its well-being. Furthermore, the presence of heavy machinery in a space frequented by families and walkers poses a direct physical danger to the public.

2. Rare Ecological Habitat Over the last 40 years, this site has undergone a remarkable process of natural rewilding. Rewilded industrial land is now recognized as one of the rarest and most biodiverse habitat types in the UK.

Flora: The site supports rare orchid species, including the Lizard Orchid, Bee Orchid, and Man Orchid.

Fauna: It is a confirmed habitat for protected reptiles, including slow worms, grass snakes, and lizards.

Chiroptera (Bats): Critically, the site is home to hundreds of bats that nest within the trees and the cliff faces. The dense ivy clinging to the cliffs provides essential roosting habitat. These populations will be severely affected by the development, particularly through light pollution, which disrupts delicate predator-prey dynamics, and constant noise pollution from generators and heavy machinery.

Avian Life: The area hosts Red-listed bird species and serves as a crucial stop for visitors like the Cuckoo and the rare Wryneck.

3. Contamination and Environmental Risk The site is constructed on colliery waste and is known to be contaminated. It is a matter of public record that the infrastructure is slowly degrading over time.

Leaking Pollutants: Driving heavy machinery over this fragile, contaminated crust risks fracturing the surface, potentially leaching lethal pollutants into the adjacent Pegwell Bay SSSI.

Carbon Release: Disturbance of the salt marsh and surrounding area will release significant stored carbon, contradicting modern environmental standards.

4. Lack of Due Diligence and Surveying It is an absolute "shambles" that National Grid has reached this stage of the process without conducting any comprehensive ecological or geological surveys of the Hoverport site. For a project of this magnitude, adjacent to an SSSI, a minimum of two years of seasonal surveys should have been required to understand the migratory patterns, roosting sites for bats, and other protected species present. National Grid is proceeding with a complete lack of awareness regarding the local geography and ecology.

5. Impact on the SSSI and Salt Marsh The plan to move heavy machinery out onto Pegwell Bay is catastrophic. Beyond the physical destruction of the salt marsh, it sets a dangerous precedent. This is a restricted area; seeing industrial activity on the bay will inadvertently encourage public encroachment, leading to endless disturbance of protected wetland birds. Conclusion National Grid has clearly "not done their homework." The use of the Hoverport site is entirely unsuitable for a project of this scale. The destruction of a precious, rewilded habitat, the displacement of significant bat colonies, the risk of toxic runoff into an SSSI, and the loss of essential public amenity space are costs that the local community should not be asked to bear.

I urge the Examining Authority to refuse these plans and protect this unique site from permanent destruction.

Yours faithfully, Nik Mitchell















